



“We are just cheerleaders”: Youth's views on their participation in international forest-related decision-making fora

Sekar A.W. Yunita¹, Emma Soraya, Ahmad Maryudi*

Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Youth
Participation
Deliberation
Global policy
Forest
UNFF
UNFCCC
CBD

ABSTRACT

The failure of the multilateral processes to deliver comprehensive treaties has illuminated the importance of participatory and deliberative processes in global forest policy. There has been scholarly work on the role of different actors in global forest policy fora, including the roles of: environmental non-government organizations, private sector, public administrations, and scientific communities. However, literature search suggests studies on the participation of the youth groups are almost non-existent. Our research aimed to assess how youth delegates perceive their participation in the international forest-related conferences, and to identify areas that they think can improve their engagement in the international forest-related fora. We surveyed the youth participants of three international forest-related decision-making processes and fora: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although they felt their participation was valued, a large majority of them suggested that the opportunities to express their opinions and ideas remain limited. More importantly, they were afraid that their views and ideas on how to deal with the current forest challenges were not taken into consideration. They further argued that the forest-related international conferences should provide more opportunities for youth to facilitate engagement with other groups, to share ideas, wisdom and solutions.

1. Introduction

Ever since the 1987 *Our Common Future* report, and subsequently the 1992 Rio Summit, complex problems of forest loss and environmental deterioration have become core political agendas of decision making processes at the global level (Singer and Giessen, 2017). Previously, forest and environment issues were being dealt by principally state actors in both multilateral and domestic processes. However, the failure of the multilateral processes in producing comprehensive treaties (see Humphreys, 2005; Dimitrov, 2005) has illuminated legitimacy deficits (Haas, 2004) and the importance of participatory and deliberative procedures in global forest policy making (Stevenson and Dryzek, 2012). Capistrano et al. (2007) argue that the pressing forest-related problems and the emerging policy challenges require multi-stakeholder coordination, partnerships and collaboration.

A broad range of actors, both public and private, have cooperated and/or competed in defining global forest agenda over the past two decades (McDermott et al., 2010). They include nation-states, international non-government organizations (NGOs), the corporate sector, and expert groups (O'Neill, 2009). A body of scholarly work has examined

the role of the different actors: environmental NGOs, in both multilateral processes (e.g. Humphreys, 2004; Giessen, 2008; O'Neill, 2009) and non-state processes, notably forest certification (e.g. Cashore et al., 2004; Orsini, 2013), firms and corporates (Bled, 2009), and nation-states and public administrations (Dimitrov, 2005; Giessen et al., 2014), and scientific communities (Bäckstrand, 2003; Giessen, 2008; Larigauderie and Mooney, 2010). However, a literature search reveals almost no studies of youth participation in global forest policy processes; we are keen on filling this research gap. This paper aims to assess how youth delegates perceive their participation in the international forest-related processes, and to identify areas that they think can improve their engagement in the international forest-related fora.

‘Youth’ is broadly defined by the United Nations as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). The population of the age cohort in 2015 was 1.2 billion, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide (UN-DESA, 2015). Incorporating youth's voice in decision-making processes has become a norm in global development (Bersaglio et al., 2015). Ensuring that the voices of youth are heard is also embedded in the concept of sustainable development, which

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ahmad_maryudi@ugm.ac.id (A. Maryudi).

¹ International Forestry Students' Association, Asia-Pacific Regional Representative 2014–2015.

emphasises the ability of “future generations” to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development/WCED, 1987). It is increasingly thought that youth could act as meaningful contributor to global deliberations and agent of change (Ward and Parker, 2013; Richards-Schuster and Pritzker, 2015). They possess intrinsic strengths of creativity and energy to mobilize support (Wong et al., 2010).

The importance of involving youth in the global deliberation was first brought to the table during the Rio Summit. Agenda 21 (Chapters 11 and 25) specifically mentions that their inclusion in environment and development decision-making and in the program implementation is regarded as one of the important keys to ensure a rational and holistic approach to the sustainable and environmentally sound development of forests and the environment (United Nations, 1992). Since the Rio Summit, the UN has formalized youth as one of the Major Groups channeling participation in activities within its system (United Nations, 1992). Youth delegates have been invited to participate in three global forest- and environment-related policy processes, namely: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

With regard to climate change negotiations, youth have been participating in the process of UNFCCC since 1999 in the Conference of the Parties (COP) 5 held in Bonn. In 2009, the UNFCCC secretariat granted a provisional constituency status to the youth non-governmental organization/YOUNGO (Youth Climate, 2014). Similarly, UNFF recognized youth as one of its major groups in Major Group (MG) Children and Youth, which is represented by the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA). In CBD, the youth network called the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) has been participating the conference since 2012. Nonetheless, there might be underlying and practical barriers for youth to participate in decision making processes at the international level; it is indicated that the participatory mechanisms for youth frequently may not fully allow them to contribute meaningfully in the processes (United Nations, 2010).

2. Theoretical considerations: Democratic deliberation for youth

Participation -often synonymised with representation, involvement and recently deliberation (Innes and Booher, 2004)- has become a norm in decision making over the approaches and instruments for conservation and management of forests and environment. The main motivation for promoting participation in the decision making processes is connected to the perceived ineffectiveness of past methods (Abelson et al., 2003). The general idea is that the greater public involvement, the better decisions and solutions. The new social movement representing diverse values, needs and perceptions challenge the legitimacy of hierarchical and centralized decisions (Giessen, 2008). More generally, the concept of participation has been increasingly connected to democratic governance (Gaventa, 2003). It relates to legitimacy and sustainability of the decisions made for societal problems and challenges that need solutions. Dryzek (2001: 651) points out that “outcomes are legitimate to the extent they receive reflective assent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those subject to the decision in question”. This is particularly crucial for decisions over forests and environment, which increasingly characterised by a plurality of perspectives and values (Krott, 2005; Prabowo et al., 2017; Setiawan et al., 2016; Maryudi and Krott, 2012; Maryudi and Sahide, 2017).

Participation is embedded in governance, which cannot be associated with governments solely; instead the political decisions were made by involving networks of actors including wider civil societies. Parkins and Mitchell (2005) point out that deliberative democratic theory often emphasises the process itself. Participation relates not only to representation, but also empowerment of the actors involved. This emancipatory participation stresses that decision making processes ensure the voices of the less privileged groups being heard. In this way,

all participants in decision making processes are engaged in “mutual communication and exchange of ideas, assessments and evaluations [to] improve the final decisions” (Renn and Schweizer, 2009: 175). They are provided with fair opportunities to express their opinions; no particular interests dominate the deliberation processes (Renn and Schweizer, 2009).

Thus, this emancipatory participation should be seen at the broader context of existing socio-political power structure. Decision making procedures for particular societal problems are often adult-biased (Wong et al., 2010). As such, there is a youth participation movement (Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006) demanding a voice in today's decisions (Ginwright and James, 2002; Checkoway, 2011; Nikolayenko, 2012). Lentin and Ohana (2008) argue that youth participation is focused on “young people being represented in political process and decision making”. There is a range of requirements needed to support a genuine participation: legal frameworks; information provision; cultural and attitudinal change among adults and decision-makers; clear and supportive mechanisms, service or organizational processes; and opportunity for complaints (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010).

3. Research methods

3.1. Research approach

We surveyed the views of the participants of three international forest-related decision-making processes and fora: UNFCCC, CBD, and UNFF. We conducted a survey using internet-based questionnaire between 10 September and 25 October 2016. This technique was employed because the target of research participants spread from all around the world (Africa, America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe). In addition, it was much cheaper and faster than either face-to-face or telephone interviews. Furthermore, the internet-based approach was used to facilitate honest answers. The research participants were young people who have attended UNFCCC, CBD, and UNFF conferences/meetings. To implement this approach, we first needed their contact. To date, no data are available on the number of young people attended the three fora. The first author has some contacts from her participation in some of the aforementioned international fora. Besides contacting each delegate personally, we also circulated questionnaires through the mailing list of YOUNGO, GYBN and IFSA. We also contacted the focal points of the respective youth groups (YOUNGO, GYBN, and IFSA) to encourage the former delegates of the related conferences to respond. To boost the response rate, we sought constructive inputs by making questions that elaborated their thoughts and assured the anonymity. We also sent three reminders for the youth participants who had not filled the survey: three days before deadline, on the deadline, and three days after deadline.

3.2. Analytical frameworks and operationalisation

We assessed the views of youth on their participation in international decision-making fora. We specifically explored their views on four aspects: inclusivity, transparency, interactivity, and continuity (Bickerstaff et al., 2002). Based on the requirements for a genuine youth participation proposed by Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010), we defined the aspects and further detailed them into more operationalized indicators and statements about their participation in the conferences (Table 1). Each of the operationalized indicators was elaborated into five Likert response scale questions. It is the type of question that asks for opinion using 1-to-5 scale, in which: 1 denotes *Strongly Disagree*, 2 denotes *Disagree*, 3 denotes *Neutral*, 4 denotes *Agree*, and 5 denotes *Strongly Agree*.

We classified the forum participants into two groups: experts and non-experts. The experts were those who have been or are now serving as the coordinators of YOUNGO (UNFCCC Focal Point for Youth), GYBN (CBD Focal Point for Major Group Children and Youth), and IFSA

Table 1

Research framework to assess youth participation in international forest-related negotiation fora (drawn from Bickerstaff et al., 2002, Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010).

Aspects of participation	Operationalisation	
	Indicators	Statements
Inclusivity	- Financial support to attend the meeting - Ease in registration procedures - Appreciation of youth participation - Assistance during the negotiation processes	S1. I obtained sufficient financial support to attend the meeting S2. I registered to the conference easily S3. My participation was appreciated S4. I received adequate assistance during the negotiation processes
Transparency	- Availability of necessary information prior conference meetings - Availability of necessary information during conference meetings - Adequacy and clarity of conference agenda - Dissemination of outcomes to youth participants	S5. I found necessary information adequately available prior conference S6. I found necessary information adequately available during conference S7. I found conference agenda adequate and clear S8. I received the conference outcomes
Interactivity	- Opportunity to deliver opinions - Encouragement to deliver opinions from non-youth participants - Variety of methods used to engage youth in the conference - Elaboration of youth's comments/inputs in final outcomes	S9. I considered youth had opportunities to deliver opinions S10. I felt encouraged to deliver opinions by non-youth participants S11. I observed variety of methods used to engage youth in the conference S12. I considered youth comments elaborated in final outcomes
Continuity	- Availability of mechanisms for participants to send feedbacks on the outcomes - Adequacy of updates on implementation of the outcomes - Opportunity to deliver feedbacks to improve youth participation	S13. I found mechanisms for participants to send feedbacks on the outcomes S14. I received updates on implementation of the outcomes S15. I observed opportunities to deliver feedbacks to improve youth participation

(UNFF Focal Point for Major Group Children and Youth). With that role, they had capacity to speak in the main events. We also assumed that they have better knowledge of the substance and processes of the conferences. Both groups were asked with Likert response scale questions. For the expert group, we added open-ended response box for each of the question. This was used to enhance the analysis of the responses from non-expert participants. Before being fully used, the survey instruments were circulated to the coordinator of the youth focal points for comments and suggestions. We also used secondary data to understand the forms of participation as well as to complete the information that research participants may have missed to mention in the survey. The secondary data include reports of YOUNGO, GYBN, IFSA delegations to related conference.

4. Results

4.1. Overview on the research participants

We collected 80 contacts of youth participants/delegates in UNFCCC, CBD and UNFF conferences/meetings. 52 participants (relatively equal sex distribution: 28 males, 24 females) completed the questionnaires. The response rate of our survey is 69.4%, which is much higher than the average of responses of online surveys (30%) (Saldívar, 2012).

The highest research participation was obtained from UNFCCC (27 participants, including two focal points/experts), followed by CBD (15 participants, including one focal point), and UNFF (10 participants, including one focal point). There are two possible explanations on why more than 50% of research participants were from UNFCCC conferences. First, UNFCCC has invited youth to participate long before CBD and UNFF. In addition, UNFCCC is held every year, while both UNFF and CBD are every other year. Although we have distributed the questionnaires equally to youth delegates from all of four regions, nearly half of the research participants (46%) were from Asia-Pacific, followed by those from America (25%), Europe (19%), and Africa.

We obtained responses from the youth participants from nearly all conferences between 2008 and 2015, except from UNFCCC 2008 and 2010, and UNFF 2009. This means that our study has some sensitivity to dynamics in the conferences over time, if any. A half of our research participants attended the most recent conferences/meetings, i.e.: COP21-UNFCCC Paris (2015), COP12-CBD Pyongyang (2014), and UNFF11 New York (2015). One reason that may explain the high proportion of the recent participants is that they may still be fresh and remain enthusiastic from their participation. From the research perspective, the recent participants may provide updated situations in the

respective conferences/meetings.

In terms of geographical distribution, youth from America and Europe regions made up the highest proportion in the last two UNFCCC conferences which were held in Peru and France respectively. The UNFF meeting is always held in New York; youth from the US made up the largest share in the past meetings. In contrast, the majority of youth participants in the last two CBD conferences - held in India (2012) and Republic of Korea (2014) - were from Asia region. Close proximity to the events is a possible explaining factor. Youth from distant regions appear to be most constrained, which may relate to financing issues, as discussed below.

4.2. Youth participation as perceived by respondents

The perception of youth delegates on their participation in three major international forest-related fora across the four aspects of participation is presented in Fig. 1.

4.2.1. Inclusivity

Fig. 1 clearly shows that the large majority (70–90%) of the youth participated in the three international forest-related fora *agree* and *strongly agree* on the three key elements: i.e. the ease in registration procedures, appreciation on their participation, and the assistance provided by the organizers during the event. In fact no one suggested that there are difficulties in the registration procedures. Generally, the events they participated in were well-organized; registration is usually made beforehand. On-site registration was apparently well-handled by the organizers. They mostly felt that assistance was adequately provided in order to swiftly proceed to the events. One expert respondent specifically highlighted specifically the CBD Secretariat which was said to be “*highly supportive in ensuring their attendance in the conferences*”. Another research participant further cited that the Secretary General once attended a preparatory meeting held by the youth. The ease in registration procedures and assistance during the events are crucial for the youth participation. Complicated procedures would have disadvantaged them in a way that they did not spent much time on “housekeeping stuff”, and instead focused on how they could have meaningfully engaged in the events.

Only a few (12%) of the youth participants strongly disagreed with the assistance provided during the events. However, we were unable to probe why they did not seek or receive assistance from the organizers. Major international events are generally attended by numerous people from various organizations and affiliations. This is particularly so for UNFCCC conferences which involve wider array of stakeholders than

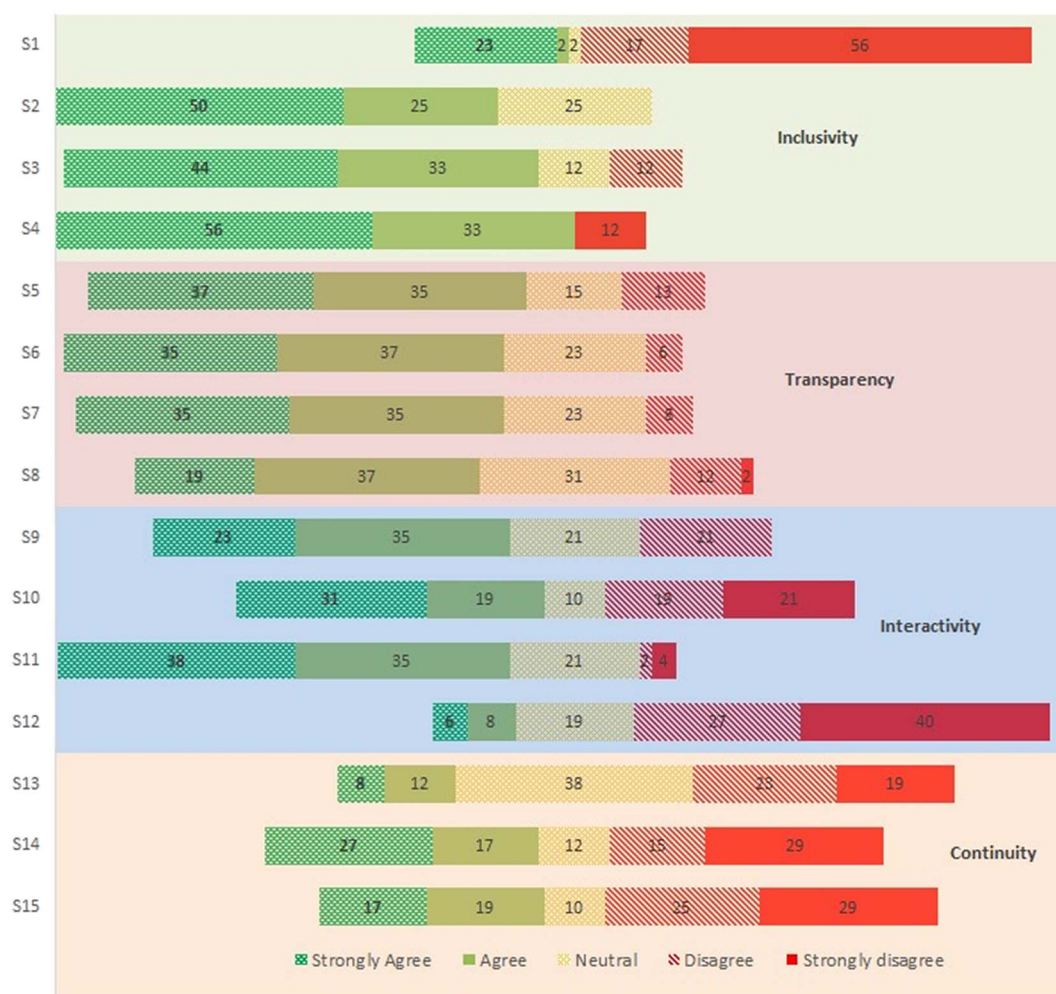


Fig. 1. Youth's perceptions of their participation in international forest-related decision-making fora (percentage responding to each statement, listed in Table 1).

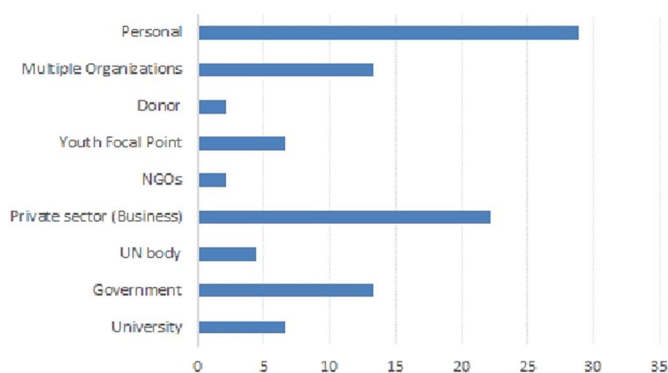


Fig. 2. Sources of financial funding for attending the events (in percentage, respondents may have had more than one source).

UNFF and CBD. It is unlikely that the organizers assist every single attendance. Quite possible, they did not actively seek the assistance both from the organizers and the other participants.

One positive finding from the research is that the youth participants mostly felt that their participation was valued by other delegates and the organizers (Fig. 1). Our expert respondents particularly highlighted UNFF meetings, where the youth have direct access to interact in the forum and are given “freedom of speech”. They further added that UNFF meetings “provide the youth with opportunities to develop their contribution with guidance from experienced participants”. In fact, active and meaningful participation of certain participants in multi-actors

arenas could be compromised by psychological barriers. Youth delegates could have had tendencies to discount the importance of their participation bearing in mind that other delegates are likely to have higher standing and greater experience. In such circumstances they could have been unable to feel the confidence necessary to participate in the processes. The feeling that their participation is valued should provide the comfort for the youth delegates and boost their confidence, leading to the improved inclusiveness of the whole processes. Only 10% of them disagreed that their participation was valued. Further investigation revealed that the negative responses were from few UNFCCC participants who suggested that “the main and plenary sessions denied the youth to attend”.

Fig. 1 also shows an important issue, that youth delegates clearly faced challenges in obtaining financial support to attend the events, since few have been assisted by the organizers. Since the events apparently represented “once in a lifetime experience”, nearly a third of them were prepared to self-fund (partly or fully) their participation (Fig. 2). This clearly correlates with the fact that the participation was mostly made to the events held in their home or neighbouring countries. Others also conducted fund raising events and sought financial support from various organizations, e.g. the governments (13%), business entities (22%), their respective universities, or even multiple funding agencies (13%).

4.2.2. Transparency

Fig. 1 also shows among the four aspects of participation, the youth participants felt that transparency was the best aspect of the

international fora. At least 60% of them agreed and strongly agreed to the statements that the necessary information that supported their participation were adequately made available both prior and during the events, the agenda was clearly and adequately communicated, and the outcomes of the events were circulated to them (Fig. 1). A further 20–30% had a neutral view, which mean that they did not express negative perceptions. Only a tenth disagreed and strongly disagreed with the four analytical statements.

Further investigation on the responses revealed that before participating, most of the research participants suggested that they had access to materials about the events and the cross-cutting issues being negotiated or discussed; and the important decisions from the previous events from diverse sources, such as the respective focal points of the youth groups, organizers, and environment-related ministries in their home countries. Some of the also conducted independent-research through internet-based search engines. In addition, most of them suggested that information was available during both the main and side events. This allowed the youth to get acclimatized with the whole processes of the event attended. Understanding of the issues discussed is crucial for more active engagement in the events; without proper preparation, they may have been passive participants.

More than two thirds of the participants also agreed and strongly agreed that they were adequately informed of the agenda. They further suggested that the organizers kept them updated on the agendas beforehand and during the events. Half of them have actively contacted the organizers and sought information and detailed agendas. They suggested that changes on the agenda were clearly communicated. Outcomes of the events were also circulated, as indicated from the high proportion of *agree* and *strongly agree* notes.

The clear positive responses on the four analytical elements of transparency is quite interesting bearing in mind that youth delegates were prohibited from participating in some main events, principally in UNFCCC COPs. Half of the research participants attended the climate conferences; a few of them in fact raised the issue of exclusion when they were asked how to foster youth participation. There are some possibilities explaining the high positive responses. First, the exclusion from the main events might have been well compensated by the youth sessions in the climate conferences. In fact, several UNFCCC youth participants claimed that “*the side events are empowering*”. Secondly, it might have been due to ambiguities in the questions that did not specify or highlight the exclusion of youth in UNFCCC main sessions.

4.2.3. Interactivity

Fig. 1 shows the contrasting responses across the four analytical elements of interactivity. Youth participants generally expressed their approval that there were adequate opportunities for them to deliver their opinions, although a fifth of them suggested otherwise. More youth participants suggested that the methods provided to deliver the opinion were quite varied. Nonetheless, their views on whether they felt encouraged to deliver the opinion are equally split. We probed further to find the explanatory factors of these interesting findings. Fig. 3 shows that youth participants were quite active; only about a fourth did not deliver their opinions. Nearly three fourths were speaking up, mostly in the side events and few in plenary sessions. To some extent, this is explained by the fact that a half of them participated in UNFCCC conferences (see Table 2), which prohibit their attendance in the plenary sessions. As previously mentioned, the non-access to UNFCCC's main events was cited by many of the research participants. Even in the side events, they argued that there was limited time for raising questions or to delivering opinions.

Even when opportunities arose, such as in CBD and UNFCCC events, some of our respondents were still reluctant to speak up. They might need some confidence to doing so. Encouragement from other (non-youth) delegates might be crucial in this circumstance. As previously noted, nearly a half of them, which corresponds to the proportion of our research participants attending UNFCCC events, suggested that such an

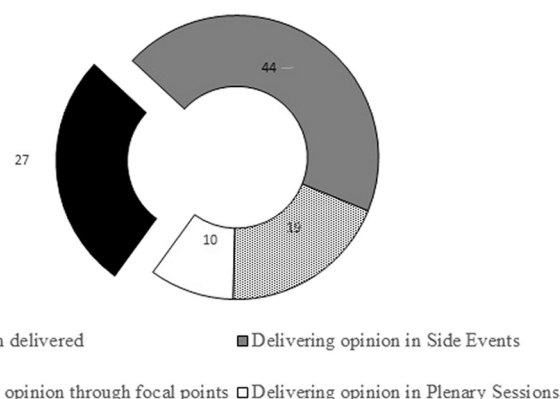


Fig. 3. Youth delegates delivering opinions (in percentage).

Table 2

Profile of research participants based on sex and regions.

No	Conference	Aspects						Total
		Sex		Region				
				Africa	America	Asia-Pacific	Europe	
		Male	Female					
1	UNFCCC	14	13	3	9	9	6	27
2	UNFF	7	3	1	3	3	3	10
3	CBD	7	8	1	1	12	1	15
Total		28	24	5	13	24	10	52

encouragement was non-existent. In contrast, UNFF events provided adequate time for engagement and discussion of topics of interests to all Major Groups, including the youth. The youth participants highlighted that they were paired with non-youth (experienced) participants, who guided them to develop their contribution. In addition, they argue that the mechanism allowed learning processes, although it has some drawbacks of slowing down the discussions. Fig. 1 furthermore reveals that most of youth participants disagreed that their views and opinions were reflected in final outcomes of the events. One expert-participant was sceptical, mentioning that UNFCCC might take youth's views lightly so that they were not allowed to attend the plenary sessions.

4.2.4. Continuity

Fig. 1 shows that in general, youth were concerned with the continuity aspects of their participation. Their views were split when asked whether they were kept updated on the implementation of the outcomes. Our findings are interesting for the following reasons. First, important or major decisions of international forest-related decision-making fora are usually made public and are easily accessible. Second, the fact that young generation is generally exposed to updated information might easily be interpreted as the youth participants do not maintain their interests on the cross-cutting forest issues and challenges. Nonetheless, the personal experience of the first author suggests otherwise; after participating in the forest-related events, the youth participants continue to enhance their knowledge the implementation of major decisions resulting from the international conferences. It is more likely that, in responding our questionnaire they were expecting direct information from the event organizers or secretariat.

Fig. 1 also reveals that very few agreed or strongly agreed that there were mechanisms to send feedback on the outcomes and to improve future youth participation. UNFF participants for instance mentioned that there were “*lack of opportunities to influence the meeting agenda*”. This view was shared by CBD youth participants, who argued that there was low public/media outreach. The lack of follow-up was also mentioned the youth participants across the three different events. Transfer

of information and/or decisions was said to be very slow. We are unable to probe why they viewed that there were limited mechanisms to foster future youth participation. Nonetheless, the responses implicitly indicate that much remains to be done for meaningful youth participation. In this research, we asked them areas for improving future youth participation. Most participants across the three events reported that improving youth knowledge prior or during the conference would most improve the youth participation in the forum. Despite the best efforts they made, they admitted that it would be a big ask for them to understand the complex international forest policy processes. One participant added that a pre-conference briefing or session would help them to acclimatise with issues will be discussed.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Involvement and participation of younger generation in global development initiatives and decision-making processes have increasingly become an “uncontested urgency” (Herrera, 2006). The growing calls for youth participation are generally explained from both ethical and strategic perspectives. Youth are the inheritors of the future (Zurba and Trimble, 2014) and key targets of development (Bersaglio et al., 2015). For these reasons, they should be provided with opportunities to speak about development issues that affect their lives and future, as well as about their needs and priorities (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster, 2006). The decision made about the future they will live should not be made without involving them (Pritzker and Metzger, 2011; Havlicek et al., 2016). Secondly, young people are thought to possess great potential and capacities to meaningfully contribute to sustainable development (Ward and Parker, 2013). Their innovation and creativity, when properly nurtured, are ascribed with the potential to advance key global development objectives (Bersaglio et al., 2015). Over the past two decades, decision making on forest resource conservation and management have been negotiated or discussed in international fora, notably in CBD, UNFF and UNFCCC conferences. In these contexts, youth have been regarded as a major group and have been admitted to these international decision making processes.

In this study, we assessed their views whether they participate meaningfully in those international fora. We found that the youth that have attended the international processes viewed that the processes were inclusive in a way that their participation was valued. They also suggested that they received the necessary assistance and information to attend and to get engaged in the processes. In terms of transparency, the international processes were transparent, as they claimed that information and agenda were sufficiently distributed to them. However, they are constrained by the limited funding sources. In fact, they are arguably the least-resource group compared with other participants. This should be an important area for improvement of future international processes.

More importantly, the youth participants still viewed the interaction as superficial and that there was a lack of continuity. A large proportion of them suggested that opportunities to express their opinions and ideas remain limited. They argued that the forest-related international conferences should provide more opportunities for the youth to facilitate engagement with other groups to share ideas, wisdoms and solutions. Despite the fact that they were selected from among their peers, they apparently need encouragement from the other, non-youth, participants. The self-perception of powerlessness is a barrier for certain groups of people, such as youth, in the multi-actor arenas. Apparently, many of the youth participants were experiencing a feeling of inferiority that clearly compromised their fully meaningful engagement in the international fora. Most research participants were afraid that their views and ideas on how to deal with the current forest challenges were not taken into consideration in the international events they attended.

Although participating in the global forest policy arenas represents the nurturing processes of youth as the future generation, and should

provide a learning pathway and opportunity for them to improve their capacities, the youth delegates felt that their roles remain peripheral. This echoes the results of other studies, which highlight the limited involvement of youth in forest-related decision-making processes. For instance, Bersaglio et al. (2015) argue that youth were absent in the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals despite being made as a targeted category. In another context, of the African agricultural policy processes, youth are rarely encouraged to become independent agents able to shape their own destinies (te Lintelo, 2012).

While the course and outcomes of multilateral forest policy processes continue to show the central roles of nation-states, other non-state actors have far better influence on the policy-making processes than do youth. In fact, NGOs and private sector have influenced the textual outputs of a number global forest policy arenas (Humphreys, 2004; Bled, 2009). For instance, For example, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) prepared the draft of the CBD (O'Neill, 2009). Similarly, during COP8 of the CBD, business representatives successfully lobbied state actors to remove the text section with the reference on the negative impacts of business operations on biodiversity (Bled, 2009). Scientific communities (expert groups) are also better connected to the policy making processes. They have been regarded as “major partners in the quest for sustainability” (Bäckstrand, 2003: 24); their significant roles include the construction and mobilization of knowledge of the issues being negotiated in the multilateral policy processes (Hulme and Mahony, 2010).

There are enabling factors for the influence of these non-state actors, particularly NGOs, that young people may learn from, in order to foster their more effective participation in global forest governance. The profound roles of NGOs are facilitated by their long-term engagement and ideational resources (Orsini, 2013). They are extremely active in bringing environmental problems to the international attention, and play roles as the “conscience-keepers”, highlighting the moral and ethical imperatives to solve the environmental problems (O'Neill, 2009). Young people may channel their voices through NGOs by actively engaging in their political activities. In fact, many international and local NGOs are increasingly committed to capacity development of younger generation, through -for instance, volunteer environmental programs (Liarakou et al., 2011). Working with environmental NGOs could raise youth's awareness of the global environmental challenges as the earliest as possible, and the same time provide a learning opportunity for the youth about NGOs engage in and influence international environmental negotiations.

Other actor groups may also be expected to provide the means for youth to move beyond simply being cheerleaders in global forest policy arenas. With regard to the financial constraints youth experience, Giessen (2008) proposes special mechanisms to support less-resourced actor groups to sustain their participation in high-level political initiatives. In these contexts, the business sector should be encouraged to broaden its corporate social responsibility programs by making investment in youth development, which may include sponsorship programs for youth to attend global forest policy processes. This sort of support may also be expected from governments. In fact, they often involve epistemic communities such as experts and established academics with advisory roles for their delegates in global forest policy processes (Rietig, 2011). It might be strategic for governments to consider involving youth representatives as well for the capacity building of youth to become “ambassador” of their respective countries.

References

- Abelson, J., Forest, P.-G., Eyles, J., Smith, P., Martin, E., Gauvin, F.-P., 2003. Deliberations about deliberative methods: issues in the design and evaluation of public participation processes. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 57, 239–251.
- Bäckstrand, K., 2003. Civic science for sustainability: reframing the role of experts, policy-makers and citizens in environmental governance. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 3 (4), 24–41.
- Bersaglio, B., Enns, C., Kepe, T., 2015. Youth under construction: the United Nations'

- representations of youth in the global conversation on the post-2015 development agenda. *Can. J. Dev. Stud.* 36 (1), 57–71.
- Bickerstaff, K., Tolley, R., Walker, G., 2002. Transport planning and participation: the rhetoric and realities of public involvement. *J. Transp. Geogr.* 10, 61–73.
- Bled, A.J., 2009. Business to the rescue: private sector actors and global environmental regimes' legitimacy. *Int. Environ. Agreements* 9, 153–171.
- Capistrano, D., Kanninen, M., Guariguata, M.R., Barr, C., Sunderland, T., Raitzer, D., 2007. Revitalizing the United Nations Forum on Forests: Critical Issues and Ways Forward. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia.
- Cashore, B., Auld, G., Newsom, N., 2004. Governing through Markets: Forest Certification and the Emergence of Non-state Authority. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Checkoway, B., 2011. What is youth participation? *Child Youth Serv. Rev.* 33, 340–345.
- Checkoway, B., Gutierrez, L.M., 2006. Youth participation and community change. *J. Community Pract.* 14 (1–2), 1–9.
- Checkoway, B.N., Richards-Schuster, K., 2006. Youth participation for educational reform in low-income communities of color. In: Ginwright, S., Noguera, P., Cammarota, J. (Eds.), *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change*. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Youth Climate, 2014. Youth @ COP19 – UN Climate Negotiations. (Warsaw, Poland).
- Dimitrov, R., 2005. Hostage to norms: states, institutions and global forest politics. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 5 (4), 1–24.
- Dryzek, J., 2001. Legitimacy and economy in deliberative democracy. *Polit. Theory* 29 (5), 651–669.
- Gaventa, J., 2003. Towards participatory local governance: assessing the transformative possibilities. In: Prepared for the Conference on Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation Manchester, 27–28 February, 2003.
- Giessen, L., 2008. Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe-Expert Level Meetings as a Means to Integrate the Concept of 'Public Participation' into Pan-European Decision-Making: An Evaluative Approach (Göttingen, 98p). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3249/webdoc-1749>.
- Giessen, L., Krott, M., Möllmann, T., 2014. Increasing representation of states by utilitarian as compared to environmental bureaucracies in international forest and forest-environmental policy negotiations. *Forest Policy Econ.* 38, 97–104.
- Ginwright, S., James, T., 2002. From assets to agents of change: social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New Dir. Youth Dev.* (96), 27–46.
- Haas, P., 2004. Addressing the global governance deficit. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 4 (4), 1–15.
- Havlicek, J., Lin, C.-H., Braun, M.T., 2016. Cultivating youth voice through participation in a Foster youth advisory board: perspectives of facilitators. *Child Youth Serv. Rev.* 69, 1–10.
- Herrera, L., 2006. What's new about youth? *Dev. Chang.* 37 (6), 1425–1434.
- Hulme, M., Mahony, M., 2010. Climate change: what do we know about the IPCC? *Prog. Phys. Geogr.* 34 (5), 705–718.
- Humphreys, D., 2004. Redefining the issues: NGO influence on international forest negotiations. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 4 (2), 51–74.
- Humphreys, D., 2005. The elusive quest for a global forest convention. *RECIEL* 14 (1), 1–10.
- Innes, J.E., Booher, D.E., 2004. Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Plann. Theory Pract.* 5 (4), 419–436.
- Krott, M., 2005. *Forest Policy Analysis*. Springer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.
- Larigauderie, A., Mooney, H.A., 2010. The intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services: moving a step closer to an IPCC-like mechanism for biodiversity. *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* 2 (2), 9–14.
- Lentin, A., Ohana, Y., 2008. All different-never equal? On the intolerance of tolerance. In: Born in Flensburg, Europe: Journeys with Peter Lauritzen. *Demokratie & Dialog e.V.*
- Liarakou, G., Kostelou, E., Gavrilakis, C., 2011. Environmental volunteers: factors influencing their involvement in environmental action. *Environ. Educ. Res.* 17 (5), 651–673.
- te Lintelo, D., 2012. Youth and policy processes. In: Working Paper 025. Future Agricultures.
- Maryudi, A., Krott, M., 2012. Local struggle for accessing state forest property in a montane forest village in Java, Indonesia. *J. Sustain. Dev.* 5 (7), 62–68.
- Maryudi, A., Sahide, M.A.K., 2017. Research trend: power analyses in polycentric and multi-level forest governance. *Forest Policy Econ.* 81, 65–68.
- McDermott, C.L., Humphreys, D., Wildburger, C., Wood, P., Marfo, E., Pacheco, P., Yasmi, Y., 2010. Mapping the core actors and issues defining international forest governance. In: Rayner (Ed.), *Embracing complexity: Meeting the challenges of international forest governance*. International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), pp. 19–36.
- Nikolayenko, O., 2012. Origins of the movement's strategy: the case of the Serbian youth movement Otpor. *Int. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 34 (2), 140–158.
- O'Neill, K., 2009. *The Environment and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Orsini, A., 2013. Multi-forum non-state actors: navigating the regime complexes for forestry and genetic resources. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 13 (3), 34–55.
- Parkins, J.R., Mitchell, R.E., 2005. Public participation as public debate: a deliberative turn in natural resource management. *Soc. Nat. Resour.* 18 (6), 529–540.
- Percy-Smith, B., Thomas, N. (Eds.), 2010. *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives from Theory and Practice*. Routledge, Oxon.
- Prabowo, D., Maryudi, A., Senawi, Imron M.A., 2017. Conversion of forests into oil palm plantations in West Kalimantan, Indonesia: insights from actors' power and its dynamics. *Forest Policy Econ.* 78, 32–39.
- Pritzker, S., Metzger, A., 2011. Facilitating civic engagement among rural youth: A role for social workers. In: Ginsberg, L. (Ed.), *Social Work in Rural Communities*, 5th Ed. Council on Social Work Education, Alexandria, VA.
- Renn, O., Schweizer, P.-J., 2009. Inclusive risk governance: concepts and application to environmental policy making. *Environ. Policy Govern.* 19, 174–185.
- Richards-Schuster, K., Pritzker, S., 2015. Strengthening youth participation in civic engagement: applying the convention on the rights of the child to social work practice. *Child Youth Serv. Rev.* 57, 90–97.
- Rietig, K., 2011. The Influence of Academics as Insider-Nongovernmental Actors in the Post-Kyoto Protocol Climate Change Negotiations: A Matter of Timing, Network and Policy-Entrepreneurial Capabilities. (Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, Working Paper No. 67 & Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, Working Paper No. 58).
- Saldivar, M.G., 2012. A Primer on Survey Response Rate. Learning Systems Institute, Florida State University.
- Setiawan, E.N., Maryudi, A., Purwanto, R.H., Lele, G., 2016. Opposing interests in the legalization of non-procedural forest conversion to oil palm in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Land Use Policy* 58, 472–481.
- Singer, B., Giessen, L., 2017. Towards a donut regime? Domestic actors, climatization, and the hollowing-out of the international forests regime in the Anthropocene. *Forest Policy Econ.* 79, 69–79.
- Stevenson, H., Dryzek, J.S., 2012. The legitimacy of multilateral climate governance: a deliberative democratic approach. *Crit. Pol. Stud.* 6 (1), 1–18.
- United Nations, 1992. Agenda 21-Earth summit: the united nations programme of action from Rio. In: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).
- United Nations, 2010. *World Youth Report: Youth and Climate Change*. United Nations, New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/ UN-DESA, 2015. *Youth population trends and sustainable development*. No. 2015/1.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017. What do we mean by "youth"? <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>, Accessed date: 28 November 2017.
- Ward, S., Parker, M., 2013. The voice of youth: atmosphere in positive youth development program. *Phys. Educ. Sport Pedagog.* 18 (5), 534–548.
- Wong, N.T., Zimmerman, M.A., Parker, E.A., 2010. A typology of youth participation and empowerment for child and adolescent health promotion. *Am. J. Community Psychol.* 46 (1–2), 100–114.
- World Commission on Environment and Development/WCED, 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Zurba, M., Trimble, M., 2014. Youth as the inheritors of collaboration: crises and factors that influence participation of the next generation in natural resource management. *Environ. Plann. Policy* 42, 78–87.